

REMARKS

Claims 1 through 30 were presented for examination and were pending in this application. In a Final Official Action dated February 25, 2004, claims 17 through 25 and 30 were allowed, claims 4 and 9 through 15 were objected to, and claims 1 through 3, 5 through 8, 16 and 26 through 29 were rejected. Applicants thank Examiner for examination of the claims pending in this application and addresses Examiner's comments below.

In addition, Applicants thank Examiner for taking the time to briefly discuss this response via telephone on April 26, 2004. Applicants incorporate the substance of that discussion herein and, as also discussed with Examiner, invite Examiner to contact Applicants' representative if further clarification is necessary.

Claims 3, 5 through 7, 9, 16, 28, 29 are amended herein. Claims 1, 2, 8, and 26 through 29 are canceled without prejudice. No claims are added. These changes are believed not to introduce new matter, and their entry is respectfully requested. The claims have been amended to expedite the prosecution of the application in a manner consistent with the Patent Office Business Goals, 65 Fed. Reg. 54603 (Sept. 8, 2000). In making these amendments, Applicants have not and do not narrow the scope of the protection to which Applicants consider the claimed invention to be entitled and do not concede that the subject matter of such claims was in fact disclosed or taught by the cited prior art. Rather, Applicants reserve the right to pursue such protection at a later point in time and merely seeks to pursue protection for the subject matter presented in this submission.

Based on the above Amendment and the following Remarks, Applicants respectfully request that Examiner reconsider all outstanding objections and rejections, and withdraw them.

Response to Rejection Under 35 USC 102(e)

In the fourth paragraph of the Office Action, Examiner rejects claims 1, 6 through 8, 16 and 26 through 29 under 35 USC § 102(c) as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,211,861 to Rosenberg et al. ("Rosenberg"). Claims 1, 8, and 26 through 29 are now canceled without prejudice. Thus, the rejection to these claims is now obviated. Claim 16 has been amended to now depend on claim 9, which was objected to and now amended so as to be in condition for allowance. Thus, the rejection to claim 16 is now obviated.

As for claims 6 and 7, these now claim dependency to claim 3. As set forth below, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 3 should be allowable, and hence the rejection to claims 6 and 7 should also be obviated.

Response to Rejection Under 35 USC 103(a) in View of Rosenberg and Bruneau

In the fifth paragraph of the Office Action, Examiner rejects claims 2 through 3, and 5 under 35 USC § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable in view of Rosenberg and U.S. Patent No. 6,400,352 to Bruneau et al. ("Bruneau"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 2 has been canceled, and thus, the rejection to this claim is now obviated. Applicants have amended claim 3 to incorporate the limitation of intermediate claims 1 and 2. Claim 3 recited, *inter alia*,

...
responsive to receiving the event signal, generating a notification signal to alter a characteristic within a bounded region of the control device to notify the user that the event has occurred,

wherein generating the notification signal comprises altering a visual indicator within the bounded region on the control device, and altering the indicator comprises illuminating a light source on the control device.

Thus, the claimed invention beneficially provides a notification signal through a visual indicator to the user by illuminating a light source on the control device in response to an event occurring. Hence, the user advantageously can refer to the control device rather than, for example, a computer system display, to take note of an event occurrence.

Rosenberg and Bruneau do not disclose, suggest or teach the claimed invention. As Examiner correctly notes in the fifth paragraph of the Office Action, "Rosenberg fails to show audio indicator [sic] and visual indication, such as illuminating a light source on the control device that an event has occurred." Examiner then cites Bruneau at col. 1, ll., 38-57 as showing these features stating it would have been obvious to combine this teaching with Rosenberg. Applicants respectfully disagree.

Applicants' note that the cited passage in Bruneau discloses:

The computer system can thus convey physical sensations to the user in conjunction with other visual and auditory feedback as the user is contacting the manipulandum [sic]. Commercially available force feedback devices include the ForceFX joystick from CH Products, Inc. and Immersion Corporation, and the Sidewinder Force Feedback Pro from Microsoft Corporation.

The disclosure cited clearly notes that the feedback provided to the user through the force feedback device is physical sensations. This is conventional operation in force feedback devices, such as the one Bruneau discloses. However, the visual and auditory feedback disclosed in this passage is conventional visual and auditory feedback from the computer system itself and not through the force feedback device. Examples of these conventional visual and auditory feedback from the computer system includes the graphical user interface observed by the user through a monitor (e.g., a flashing screen prompt) and an audible "beep" as heard by the user through speakers on the computer system.

In contrast to Bruneau, the claimed invention of claim 3 uses a "notification signal" to notify of an event by "altering a visual indicator within the bounded region on the control device, and altering the indicator comprises illuminating a light source on the control device." As set forth above, this is not what Bruneau discloses in its discussion of its background of the invention, which merely summarizes that feedback to a user includes physical sensations through a force feedback device in addition to conventional visual and audio feedback from the computer system itself.

Thus, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 3 is patentably distinguishable over the cited references for at least the reasons provided herein. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of claim 3 as amended herein.

Moreover, claims 5 through 7, which depend upon claim 3 are also patentable over the cited references. For example, the claimed invention of claim 5 further recites having an audio indicator through the control device as yet another feedback mechanism for a user. This is not disclosed in any of the cited references. Thus, Applicants submit that claims 5 through 7 are also patentably distinguishable over the cited reference, and thus, request allowance of these claims. In addition, Applicants note that claim 4 was previously objected to, and continue to recite additional patentable features not found in the cited references.

Conclusion

In sum, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 3 through 7, 9 through 25, and 30, as now presented herein, are patentably distinguishable over the cited references (including references cited, but not applied). Therefore, Applicants request reconsideration of the basis for the rejections and objections to these claims. Applicants also respectfully request allowance of these claims.

In addition, as noted above, Applicants respectfully invite Examiner to contact Applicants' representative at the number provided below if Examiner believes it will help expedite furtherance of this application.

Respectfully Submitted,
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